UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5

77 West Jackson Boulevard

Chicago, Illinois 60604-3590

February 24, 2011

Dear Property Owner or Resident:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency need your help. We're trying to find out if vapors from contaminated groundwater or soil in the area of the Reilly Tar & Chemical Superfund site may be causing indoor air contamination in area homes, including yours. We need your permission to come to your home and test the air below the slab and if needed, test the indoor air quality.

We plan to take samples from the sub-slab (the space under the basement floor). These samples will help EPA determine if vapors are getting into the house. We're testing for the presence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, better known as PAHs, which have been detected in the groundwater and soil under the site. I have enclosed a fact sheet to give you more details on vapor intrusion and the samples.

It's important for you to know that your drinking water is ***not*** contaminated. The drinking water for the neighborhood surrounding the site is treated by the City of St. Louis Park and is safe to drink.

To do this important air quality testing, we need you to sign and return the enclosed access agreement form giving EPA and its contractor, CH2M HILL, permission to test the air beneath your home. If the house is a rental property, both the property owner and the tenant must sign the form. This testing is done at no cost to you.

- We expect to visit your home during late March or early April. Sampling will be during business hours. The testing process takes ~24 hours.
- The samples will be analyzed by an independent laboratory and the results submitted to EPA.
- If you want to see the results of samples from your home, we will mail them to you.

Please fill out the enclosed access agreement form, sign it and return it to us by **March 15**. If you do not wish to participate in the sampling, please sign in the box at the bottom of the access agreement form. Return the form in the enclosed ***postage-paid*** reply envelope.

As mentioned in the enclosed Reilly Tar site fact sheet, you are also invited to attend an informal open house on Thursday, March 3 at the St. Louis Park Public Library, 3240 Library Lane from 2 to 4 p.m. or 6 to 8 p.m. You may turn in your signed access agreement during the open house. However, if you can't attend but still wish to turn the Consent for Access form in person, please contact Heriberto León, Community Involvement Coordinator at (800) 621-8431, Ext. 66163 to make arrangements. Finally, if you have technical questions about the site or would like to meet

with me in person about sampling locations at your property, please contact me at (800) 621-8431, Ext. 68961. Both Mr. León and I will be in St. Louis Park from March 2 to 4.

Sincerely,

Michelle Kerr
Remedial Project Manager, Superfund Division
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Enclosures: Access Agreement, Postage-paid envelope, Vapor intrusion fact sheet, Reilly Tar & Chemical Superfund site fact sheet.

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Consent for Access to Property

Name (please print): _____

Address of property to be sampled: _____

_____

Home or Daytime Phone #: _____

Cell Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

I consent to officers, employees, contractors and authorized representatives of the United States Environmental Protection Agency entering and having continued access to this property for sampling and investigatory activity on the property, including, but not limited to:

- Conducting air monitoring and air sampling activities.

I realize that these actions taken by EPA are undertaken pursuant to its response and enforcement responsibilities under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, as amended, 42 U.S. C. §9601-9601-9675 (1997).

This written permission is given by me voluntarily, on behalf of myself and all other co-owners of this property, with knowledge of my right to refuse and without threats or promises of any kind.

_____ _____

Date **Signature**

Sample Location Questions:

1. Are you the Owner _____ or the Tenant _____ of the home or building? If you are the owner, go to #3.

2. If you are the Tenant, please write in the owner's name: _____ . Then turn this page over and fill in the requested information.

(over, please)

If you are the owner but live at a different address, write your address below (this is the address where the sample results will be mailed; otherwise, the results will be mailed to the address at the top of the page):

Owner's Address:_____

_____

Home or Daytime Phone #: _____

Cell Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

3. Does the home or building have a basement? Yes _____ No _____ (If no, you are done)
4. If yes, does the basement have a concrete slab? Yes _____ No _____
5. If no, does the basement have a dirt floor? Yes _____ No _____ Partial _____

I DO NOT authorize access to my property by EPA.

Print Name Signature Date

Please return this form to:

Heriberto León, EPA Region 5 (SI-7J), 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60604
Fax: 312-697-2754 E-mail: leon.heriberto@epa.gov

United States Environmental Protection Agency

EPA to Investigate Vapor Intrusion Problem

Reilly Tar & Chemical Site

St. Louis Park, Minnesota February 2011

Availability sessions

EPA is holding informal availability sessions about the vapor intrusion testing near the Reilly Tar & Chemical site on Thursday, March 3, at the St. Louis Park Public Library, 3240 Library Lane. Please drop in between 2-4 p.m. or 6-8 p.m. to visit with an EPA representative.

For more information

For more information about the Reilly Tar & Chemical site, please contact:

Heriberto León
Community Involvement Coordinator
Superfund Division (SI-7J)
EPA Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604
800-621-8431, Ext. 66163,
weekdays, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
leon.heriberto@epa.gov

Michelle Kerr
Remedial Project Manager
Superfund Division (SRF-6J)
EPA Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604
800-621-8431, Ext. 68961,
weekdays, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
kerr.michelle@epa.gov

Project documents are available at the site information repository:

St. Louis Park Public Library
3240 Library Lane
or at:

www.epa.gov/region5/sites/reillytarmn/

http://www.epa.gov/R5Super/npl/minnesota/MND980609804.htm

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency are trying to find out if vapors from contaminated underground water supplies in the vicinity of the Reilly Tar & Chemical Superfund site are causing indoor air pollution in nearby homes. This fact sheet provides an update on the proposed testing activities, gives a brief background on the site history and answers frequently asked questions about the testing.

In late February and early March, EPA will be contacting residents to seek permission to test the air below their basements, slabs or crawl spaces. This is called "sub-slab" sampling, which tests for gases that may be collecting beneath building foundations. At issue is an environmental problem called "vapor intrusion" that occurs when chemicals in the underground water give off potentially hazardous gases that can rise up through the soil and seep into buildings through foundation cracks and holes.

Sampling of residences where permission has been given will be conducted in late March or early April. EPA contractors will be visiting homes to install the sampling equipment during normal business hours.

Site background

The 80-acre Reilly Tar & Chemical site is bound to the north by West 32nd Street and to the south by Walker Street in St. Louis Park. The property extends east of Louisiana Avenue and about 1,200 feet west of Louisiana Avenue.

The Reilly Tar location was used for coal tar distillation and wood preserving from 1917 to 1972. The site was sold to St. Louis Park and converted to recreational and residential uses in 1972. Waste was disposed of on-site in several ditches that flowed to an adjacent wetland. The wastes generated by Reilly Tar were mostly polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which contaminated the soil and ground water beneath the site. About 43,000 people use the ground water from aquifers near the site, but the treated drinking water is safe from site pollution.

In 1982 EPA provided funds to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to clean two contaminated wells that had been used to dispose of site wastes. In 1984 EPA issued a legal order, and Reilly Tar & Chemical constructed a treatment system to clean two contaminated municipal wells, restore drinking water, and stop site wastes from contaminating additional wells. The company, EPA and MPCA subsequently signed a consent decree in September 1986. Additional pumping wells and treatment facilities were installed from the late 1980s to mid-1990s.

To monitor these cleanup activities, the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA known as the Superfund law) requires a five-year review process for contaminated sites such as Reilly Tar.

The purpose of this requirement is to make sure that sites that are cleaned up continue to protect human health and the environment. There have been three five-year reviews conducted by MPCA and EPA for the Reilly Tar site in 1996, 2001 and 2006.

The second five-year review in 2001concluded that cleanup actions were protecting human health but recommended additional ground water monitoring and testing be performed to ensure long-term protection.

In September 2006, the third five-year review concluded the treatment system to clean the contaminated wells continues to provide safe drinking water and protect human health and the environment. However, ground water testing indicated the potential for contamination in the Prairie du Chien aquifer and possible vapor intrusion into buildings near the site.

Recommendations of 2006 review

The following are some of the recommendations and follow-up actions from the 2006 five-year review:

- Evaluate the need for additional monitoring and pumping schemes of wells.
- Monitor the possible vertical flow of contamination between underground drinking water aquifers.
- Evaluate the potential for vapor intrusion into on-site buildings.
- Prepare site controls, such as signs, to restrict access and protect human health.
- Evaluate monitoring, well construction and compliance with Minnesota Department of Health well codes.

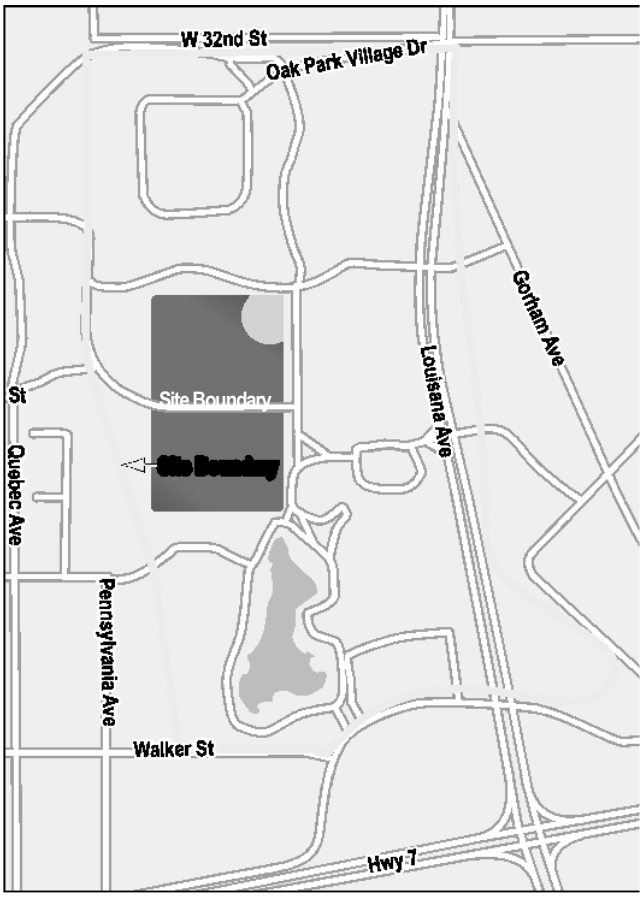
Frequently asked questions

Q Why are some households being asked to participate and others not?

A Properties have been identified for testing, because they are located on or near the Reilly Tar & Chemical Superfund site where EPA would like to test for possible PAH contamination. PAHs are chemicals that are formed during the incomplete burning of coal, oil, gas, garbage and other organic substances, and are found in coal tar, crude oil, creosote and roofing tar.

Q Is the drinking water safe?

A Yes, the city's drinking water is safe. Drinking water is drawn from deep aquifers that have been treated and tested.



Q Why is the sub-slab testing necessary?

A PAHs were detected from the Reilly Tar site near your residence. Testing is necessary to identify specific locations where contamination may be present so that cleanup activities can be planned, if necessary, to ensure the health of residents. For more information on the health effects of PAHs go to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry information page at www.atsdr.cdc.gov/substances/toxsubstance.asp?toxid=25.

Q How will sampling be done?

A With the owner's permission, EPA will test the soil gas under properties to determine if any contamination is present. It will take about two weeks for workers to test all of the homes near the site. EPA contractors will drill a small hole in the basement or crawl space floor to collect a sub-slab sample. The hole will be filled or patched once the sampling has been completed. Collecting the samples for PAHs will take a few hours (partially automated). Collecting samples for another class of chemicals called volatile

organic compounds (VOCs) will take 24 hours (automated). Sub-slab samples will be taken because they can be more accurate than indoor air samples, which can be compromised by the presence of common household products such as cleaners and paint. The sub-slab sample will be sent to a certified laboratory for analysis. If contamination is detected below the surface, EPA may conduct further sampling, or facilitate installation of cleanup systems.

Q Why are we concerned about PAH contamination?

A There is usually no detectable odor from low levels of PAHs. Breathing these low levels for long periods, however, may increase the risk of health problems. EPA wants to protect people's health by identifying and eliminating any harmful vapors in people's basements, even if the risks are very low.

Sub-slab sampling canister and probe.

A vapor removal system.

Q If PAHs are detected under my property, what then?

A If the sample results indicate PAHs above safe levels, EPA will quickly work with the affected residents and owners to determine if further testing or mitigation is needed. EPA will facilitate a response to any immediate health threat using its emergency authority under federal law, if necessary.

Q Where can I learn more about vapor intrusion?

A If you would like more information, go to www.epa.gov/ada/gw/vapor.html.

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 5
Superfund Division (SI-7J)
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

FIRST CLASS

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

AIR QUALITY SAMPLING UPDATE:
Reilly Tar & Chemical Corporation (St. Louis Park Plant)

This fact sheet is printed on paper made of recycled fibers.

Question & Answer Sessions

EPA is holding informal question and answer sessions about the air quality testing and the Reilly Tar & Chemical site on:

Thursday, March 3
St. Louis Park Public Library
3240 Library Lane
2-4 p.m. or 6-8 p.m.

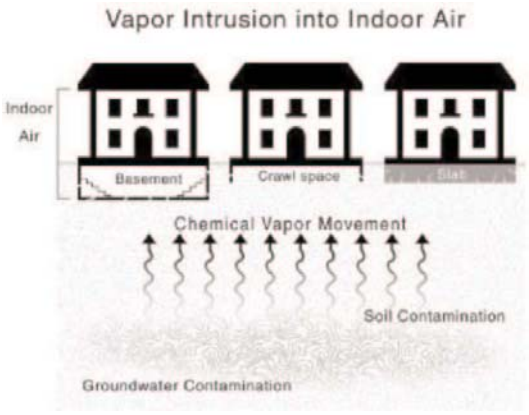
United States Environmental Protection Agency

What You Should Know About Vapor Intrusion

EPA has developed this fact sheet to answer some of the most commonly asked questions about an important health issue called vapor intrusion. Vapors and gases from contaminated groundwater and soil have the potential to seep into indoor spaces and cause health problems.

What is vapor intrusion?

When chemicals or petroleum products are spilled on the ground or leak from underground storage tanks, they can give off gases, or vapors that can get inside buildings. Common products that can cause vapor intrusion are gasoline or diesel fuel, dry cleaning solvents and industrial de-greasers. The vapors move through the soil and seep through cracks in basements, foundations, sewer lines and other openings. Vapor intrusion is a concern because vapors can build up to a point where the health of residents or workers in those buildings could be at risk. Some vapors such as those associated with petroleum products have a gasoline odor, others are odor-free.



Can vapors in my home come from household sources?

Common household products can be a source of indoor air problems. Vapors and gases can come from: paints; paint strippers or thinners; moth balls; new carpeting and furniture; stored fuel; air fresheners; cleaning products; dry cleaned clothing and even cigarette smoke.

What are the health concerns related to vapor intrusion?

When vapor intrusion does occur, the health risk will vary based on the type of chemicals, the levels of the chemical found, the length of exposure and the health of exposed individuals. Some people may experience eye and respiratory irritation, headaches and/or nausea. These symptoms are temporary and should go away when the vapors are addressed. Low-level chemical exposures over many years may raise the lifetime risk of cancer or chronic disease.

How is vapor intrusion discovered?

Samples of gas in the soil or groundwater are first collected near a contaminated site. If no contamination is found near a site, then vapor intrusion should not be a problem. If contamination is found, depending on the type, the search may be widened to include samples closer to or on individual properties. The next step is to take vapor samples from the soil under the home's foundation; these are called slab, or sub-slab samples. EPA does not generally recommend indoor air sampling before slab or sub-slab sampling, because indoor air quality varies widely day to day. Also, household products may interfere with sampling results.

What happens if a problem is found?

The most common solution is to install systems often used to reduce naturally occurring radon that seeps into homes in some geographic areas. These systems, called radon mitigation systems, remove soil vapors from below basements or foundations before they enter homes. Vapors are vented outside of the homes where they become dispersed and harmless. These systems use minimal electricity and do not affect heating and cooling efficiency. They also prevent radon from entering homes – an added health benefit especially in radon prone areas. Once the source of the vapors is eliminated, the systems should no longer be needed.

Vapor Intrusion: Tightly seal common household products after use and seal them in an area that is well ventilated to avoid the release of vapors

What can I do to improve indoor air quality?

- Don't buy more chemicals than you need.
- Store unused chemicals in appropriate tightly-sealed containers.
- Don't make your home too air tight. Fresh air helps prevent chemical build-up and mold growth.
- Fix all leaks promptly, as well as other moisture problems that encourage mold.
- Check all appliances and fireplaces annually.
- Test your home for radon. Test kits are available at hardware and home improvement stores or you can call the Radon Hotline at 800-458-1158 in New York State, or 800-648-0394 in New Jersey.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home. They are available at hardware and home improvement stores.

Sub-slab mitigation system: This system draws radon and other vapors out of the soil and vents them outside

For more information:

- For health related questions regarding vapor intrusion, contact your local health department or the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at: 1-888-422-8737 or visit their Web site at www.atdsr.cdc.gov

- For more detailed information on EPA's vapor intrusion sampling, visit the EPA's Web site at: www.epa.gov/correctiveaction/eis/vapor/guidance.pdf

- For more information on indoor air quality, visit EPA's Web site at: www.epa.gov/air/topics/comoria.html or call the indoor air Quality Information hotline at 1-800-438-4318